

F-Tec Forklift Training Engineering Centre Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1278680

Name of lead inspector: Roger Pilgrim, Ofsted Inspector

Inspection date(s): 13–14 February 2019

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Unit 17 Ash
Kembrey Park
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN2 8UN



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Forklift Training Engineering Centre Ltd (F-Tec), formerly British Industrial Truck Association (BITA) Academy, was formed in April 2014 by industry associations to provide lift-truck engineering training for apprentices and existing engineers. F-Tec worked as a subcontractor with other training providers before securing its own contract for levy-funded apprenticeships in 2017.

At the time of the monitoring visit, F-Tec had 86 apprentices on apprenticeship frameworks in lift-truck maintenance and repair at intermediate and advanced levels. These include apprentices who are aged 16 to 18. Apprentices work throughout England and attend the F-Tec training centre in Swindon for five weeks' off-the-job training each year.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have a long and well-established relationship with the forklift truck industry and have created a clear strategy to provide apprenticeships that meet the training and skills needs of this sector. Almost all intermediate apprentices are recruited from outside the industry and are new to engineering. Most advanced apprentices progress from the intermediate programme. Apprentices develop good digital and electronics skills, which they use well in their employers' maintenance and repair workshops.

Senior leaders, managers and staff fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship programme and the standards specified by the Institute of Motor Industry (IMI). Senior leaders have invested significantly in staff and training resources to ensure that apprentices develop the skills needed to maintain and repair forklift trucks. This includes high-specification equipment to help apprentices develop fault-finding skills in hydraulic and electronic systems.

Managers' very close links with employers keeps trainers well informed about developments within the industry. For example, F-Tec directors are on the boards of relevant industry bodies. Staff from F-Tec train employers' mentors in the workplace, providing them with clear guidance about the requirements of the apprenticeship and their role in supporting apprentices and monitoring their progress.

F-Tec managers and staff ensure that employers are well informed about the content of the training programme and the progress that their apprentices are making. Employers are involved fully in the development of their apprentices. For example, employers provide useful skills coaching in the workplace, setting aside time during the working week to exploit training opportunities as trucks requiring repairs come into the workshop.

Apprentices receive clear guidance at the start of their programme on the requirements of the apprenticeship, and this contributes towards the very high retention rates on the apprenticeship programmes. Staff provide apprentices with useful advice on opportunities available to them to go on to higher levels of training. They also explain what job roles apprentices could do when they finish their apprenticeship, for example as master technician and in management.

Senior leaders and managers frequently review the quality of training and the progress that apprentices make towards achieving their qualifications. Each month the management team circulates reports on apprentices' performance to indicate the progress of each apprentice for each of their learning aims. This enables staff to be aware of each apprentice's performance and to support apprentices that could be deemed as being at risk of falling behind.

Leaders and managers do not evaluate or analyse precisely enough what is going well and what needs to improve. Their self-assessment process is insufficiently self-critical. As a result, managers do not identify fully whether the actions they take are having a positive impact on the quality of training, or what they need to do to make further improvements. A business plan clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses in the organisation, but managers place insufficient emphasis on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Apprentices make good progress in developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for them to operate successfully in their maintenance workshops. They do well in passing their module exams and all six advanced apprentices due to achieve by December 2018 have done so.

F-Tec managers and trainers coordinate on- and off-the-job training well. Intermediate apprentices undertake a two-year programme that includes 10, one-week blocks at the training centre and that builds underpinning knowledge and skills. The one-year advanced apprenticeship features five, one-week blocks of training. F-Tec trainers plan the training events well and this detail is shared with employers.

This enables the employers to better prepare their apprentices to make best use of their time at the training centre. Additional off-the-job training in the workplace, such as skills coaching in fault-finding, extends apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours further so they make good progress.

Off-the-job training is effective. Trainers use their extensive industrial experience to develop learning that apprentices enjoy and that captures their attention. For example, in a lesson on engine fault diagnosis, the trainer used an analogy of running in a swimming pool to illustrate the effects of high-pressure fuel on injector component operation, which apprentices understood easily.

Trainers assess apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours thoroughly. Trainers prepare apprentices well for their assessments and most learners pass their unit exams at their first attempt. Staff monitor and track apprentices' progress carefully so that they know clearly what apprentices still need to do to complete. Staff send reports to employers on the progress of their apprentices at the end of each training block and each month. Employers value this feedback because it guides them in focusing their support for apprentices in the workplace.

Trainers' feedback on apprentices' work does not always clearly identify how that work can be improved. For example, advanced electrical diagnosis reports indicate that tests have been completed, but not how well they were undertaken and how well the apprentices used the readings obtained to inform the diagnosis. Trainers and assessors set apprentices clear targets. However, too often these targets are focused on unit completion rather than increasing apprentices' understanding of the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to achieve those units.

Most intermediate apprentices go on to study at advanced level and have their permanent employment confirmed well before the end of their apprenticeship. Apprentices are given additional responsibility at work; for example, advanced apprentices are given responsibility for maintaining and inspecting the company's hire fleet.

Apprentices' written English skills are improving. However, advanced apprentices' progress in developing the writing skills needed to produce technical reports required is slow because trainers place insufficient emphasis on the development of these skills. Apprentices' mathematical skills are developing well as these are embedded into much of the curriculum and apprentices can see the relevance of them. For example, apprentices complete calculations involving hydraulic pressures. Apprentices' skills in using software packages are developed well through undertaking a three-day intensive information and communication technology (ICT) course.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have developed appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. These include completing appropriate checks before recruiting staff to ensure that

apprentices and staff are safe. Staff and apprentices follow these policies and procedures well.

Apprentices' knowledge and understanding of health and safety, and safe working practices, are good. For example, apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe when using high-pressure hydraulic fluids and fuels and gases.

Apprentices feel safe in the training centre and in their workplace. Apprentices have good access to a 24-hour telephone helpline and they know what to do and whom to contact should they have any concerns.

Senior leaders and staff have established appropriate procedures to ensure that apprentices who stay in a local hotel when attending training at the centre are safe. They provide thorough risk assessments and adopt thorough supervision practices to maintain apprentices' personal safety when apprentices are staying away from home.

Staff responsible for safeguarding arrangements are appropriately trained, but they are new in their role and are still developing their knowledge and confidence in using the procedures.

Apprentices undertake basic training on the 'Prevent' duty and fundamental British values, and their knowledge and understanding are now extended during their off-the-job training through a 'topic of the month'. For example, trainers help apprentices discuss and understand what democracy means. However, apprentices' knowledge and understanding of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism are superficial, as trainers do not teach them in sufficient depth about these topics.

Trainers and assessors do not explore subjects such as knowledge of well-being and good mental health with apprentices, who therefore have limited awareness of these. While bullying in the workplace is understood, apprentices are less confident on how to stay safe online because trainers and assessors do not develop this knowledge well enough.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019